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Viewing cable 09MEXICO2882, ELEMENTS OF GOM POLICY TEAM INTERESTED IN FOCUSING

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| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 09MEXICO2882 | 2009-10-05 20:26 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Embassy Mexico |

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/04/2019

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SUBJECT: ELEMENTS OF GOM POLICY TEAM INTERESTED IN FOCUSING TOGETHER ON IMPROVING SECURITY IN A FEW KEY CITIES

Classified By: NAS Director Keith Mines, reasons 1.5 (b) (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: At a dinner hosted by PGR for a visiting DOJ delegation, National Security Coordinator Tello Peon and Undersecretary for Governance Gutierrez Fernandez told the delegation they would like to explore seriously focusing our joint efforts on two or three key cities to reverse the current wave of violence and instability and show success in the fight against the DTOs in the next 18 months. They suggested starting in Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana, and one other city with a joint planning cell to review what resources we could collectively bring to bear. They believe the symbolism of turning several of the most violent cities would be potent, sending a signal to the rest of the country that the fight against organized crime can be won, and combating the current sense of impotence felt by many Mexicans. They believe it would also go a long way toward stitching up the country's damaged international reputation. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Acting Attorney General Alcantara hosted a dinner for Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Division Lanny Breuer September 21 in Mexico City. Other attendees included:

GOM

National Security System Coordinator Jorge Tello Peon
Undersecretary for Governance (SEGOB) Geronimo Gutierrez Fernandez

PGR DAG (SIEDO) Marisela Morales

PGR DAG Victor Emilio Corzo Cabanas

PGR Director for Analysis and Strategic Information Oscar Rocha Dobrowski

US

Deputy Assistant AG Bruce Swartz

Deputy Assistant AG for Criminal Division Kenneth Blanco

Special Assistant to the AG Paul Rosen

DOJ Attache Tony Garcia

NAS Director Keith Mines

GOM WANTS FULL TRANSFER OF INTEL TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING

¶3. (C) Alcantara opened the meeting with two requests from Oscar Rocha. First, he said PGR would like to develop a more general exchange of intelligence information and capacity, not the case-by-case exchange we now have. Second, they would like for us to provide a full exchange of technology for use in intelligence gathering, not just the loan of equipment for specific cases, but the transfer of the know-how and training as well. Morales added that the FBI is helping to create a cyber-unit in Mexico but it would be beneficial if it were expanded and replicated more broadly. The SSP, she said, already has a cyber-unit but the real mandate rests with PGR-SIEDO. The U.S. side offered that there is great capacity in CCIPS in the Criminal Division and they would be happy to find ways to offer training and capacity building to their Mexican counterparts. We would be pleased, Breuer said, in the effort to press High Value Targets, to get our Mexican counterparts to the point where they can do these things themselves. It will take the development of strong trust through proper vetting and good training but it would be excellent to get to the point where there is no longer impunity for a Chapo Guzman because his operating space has been eliminated.

¶4. (C) Rocha then spoke of the technological leap about to take place in the coming years in the intelligence field. He cited the target-finding equipment used by the USMS with Mexican counterparts but asked if it would be possible to acquire not only such equipment for GOM officials, but also

the training and full technology transfer that would go with it. He suggested we work with vetted units first to provide such equipment and training, and then move it out more broadly, both to PGR and CISEN. The U.S. side suggested getting together in the appropriate working group to see what could be done. Rocha reiterated that his intent would be to develop indigenous to the PGR all the capacity they currently have only in conjunction with the USMS.

STRATEGIC MISCALCULATIONS IN MERIDA

15. (C) Gutierrez Fernandez then turned to the Merida Initiative, saying that in retrospect he and other GOM officials realize that not enough strategic thought went into Merida in the early phase. There was too much emphasis in the initial planning on equipment, which they now know is slow to arrive and even slower to be of direct utility in the fight against the DTOs. Of more immediate importance is building institutions that can effectively use the equipment. He was careful to point out that all the equipment is needed and will be put to good use, but wishes that there had been a more direct focus on institution building, and supported the current shift in Merida focus to capacity building and creating more effective institutions.

"WE HAVE EIGHTEEN MONTHS"

16. (C) Gutierrez went on to say, however, that he now realizes there is not even time for the institution building to take hold in the remaining years of the Calderon administration. "We have 18 months," he said, "and if we do not produce a tangible success that is recognizable to the Mexican people, it will be difficult to sustain the confrontation into the next administration." He lamented the pervasive, debilitating fear that is so much a part of contemporary Mexican society, where even people in the Yucatan, with "European levels of security" are afraid because of the instability in a few distant cities. He expressed a real concern with "losing" certain regions. It is damaging Mexico's international reputation, hurting foreign investment, and leading to a sense of government impotence, Gutierrez said.

DON'T SHY AWAY FROM THE HARDEST CHALLENGES

17. (C) Gutierrez believes what is needed is a clear roadmap for the remaining years of security cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico under President Calderon that targets a few joint projects in a few cities, rather than doing a little of everything. Tello Peon agreed, suggesting that there is not time for pilot projects, and certainly not time to work in a few relatively safe cities such as Nuevo Laredo as has been suggested, in order to develop the experience to take on the real challenges.

18. (C) Instead, he believes, we need to confront the cities with the largest insecurity and fix them. If we could turn around Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez, and one other city such as Culiacan, it would solve 60% of the violence, and send a signal to the Mexican people that the war can be won. Politically, he and Gutierrez said, Mexico must succeed in Juarez because Calderon has staked so much of his reputation there, with a major show of force that, to date, has not panned out. Even if it is not completely solved by the time Calderon leaves office, if they can get things moving in the right direction, setting the conditions for ultimate success, it will be enough. There was a brief chicken and egg discussion, with one side suggesting that well-placed and effective federal forces could push back the DTOs sufficiently for the state and local forces to function, while others believed that well-functioning state and local forces will be a precondition for the federal forces to produce stability.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

¶9. (C) Gutierrez thought that to start we need a good joint assessment of organized criminal groups that makes explicit their vulnerabilities. We have, he said, five things to put into the fight: resources, training, joint operations, technology, and cooperation, and we need to mobilize effectively all of them. He especially mentioned the need to synchronize our joint efforts, citing the recent show of force the U.S. promised on our side of the border that could not be matched by anything on the Mexican side, leaving it hollow. Tello Peon suggested we form a planning cell, a few experts on each side, who could focus on a few programs in a few places for the next 2 years.

¶10. (C) In addition to the intelligence and operational cooperation that would be at the heart of the new approach, Gutierrez and Tello Peon mentioned the importance of cultural and political factors. Politically, Mexico may have a federal system, Gutierrez said, but historically it has been more centralized like Colombia or France. The federal government, however, no longer has the ability to manage the system from top to bottom. He suggested it would be necessary for success to break through the impasse produced by Mexico's currently dysfunctional federal system and ensure programs can be synchronized with the states. Tello Peon also said there will be a need to work on the cultural factors required to produce a &culture of lawfulness8 that would mobilize the societal support necessary for success. Culture and politics will be very complex, he said, but can be made to work. A clearly articulated and strong doctrine will help get people behind the strategy.

¶11. (C) Tello Peon ended the discussion by saying he arrived at the dinner somewhat fatigued but would leave energized. He thought it was an excellent mix of people and welcomed the honest exchange of new ideas. Mexico, he summarized, is committed to staying the course, which is sustainable with a few clear successes.

¶12. (C) Comment: We will follow up with Tello Peon and Gutierrez in the coming weeks to see how committed the GOM is to the strategy of selecting a few key cities and working to turn security. If it is their strategy and they plan to execute it, we should get behind it, using the new strategic framework to build a regional program to take on the biggest challenges in key border cities. A considerable amount could be done with existing funding and a marginal increase in staffing. We would use the remainder of the calendar year for planning, and have a new series of programs ready to roll out in the new year.

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